A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers. Published by Ralph F. Cummings, Box 75, Fisherville, Mass., U. S. A. Price \$1.00 per year or ten cents a copy.

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Vol 11 April 1943

#### THE MYSTERIES OF CHINATOWN by G. H. Cordier

In a previous article the writer had endeavored to give some idea of life and conditions in San Francisco in its romantic period, and what he saw as a little boy, of a most picturesque and exciting time. In the following article the writer will try and give more details of what he saw of the citys dramatic age: and will also give some account of other places in California-known to fame by celebrated authors-which he wisited with his parents. The writers people were in fairly good circumstances. lived in a house of some pretensions built on one of the hills overlooking the famous Golden Gate. The house had an architectural feature uncommon nowadays, and that was a conservatory where potted plants were grown. This place was my delight, and there in a box I kept my stack of dime novels and other literary treasures, and also numbers of the current periodicals of the time. It might be of interest to any old timer who might read this article, if I gave the names of a few of these old time publications Leslies Illustrated Newspaper, Leslies Popular Monthly, Leslies Ladys Magazine, Leslies Chimney Corner, Leslies Pleasant Hours, Leslies Boys and Girls Weekly, and Leslies Budget, Scribners Magazine, Harpers Magazine, Harpers Weekly, Harpers Franklin Square Library, and all the many story papers of the period. The writer well remembers the time, long years afterwards, when in Harpers Weekly he first read Haggards gorgious, colorful, and most immensely absorbing romance "She" and the sensation it

caused when first published. It was dramatized and played for the first time in a theatre in Los Angeles where the writer had the pleasure of seeing its first performance. Before closing his account of the old time publications the writer would like to mention The Seaside Library and Lovels Library, and two high class juvenile magazines, which while they couldn't be considered in the Dime Novel class, nevertheless had very dramatic stories. These were St. Nicholas and Chatterbox. They both had immence popularity, and as a type of their stories I select in St. Nicholas for the year 1877 the Tower Mountain. the adventures of a man, a parrot, and a monkey in Central America, and for the year 1891, Chan Ok, the Pirate of the China Sea, And in Chatterbox in volumes in the writers collection. The Hidden City. The White Monkey, and the Coast Watchers, Also I would like to call to mind of any oldtimer who read the old original Beadle Dime Novels if they rememher two of them that were great favorites of mine. No. 25- The Peon Prince, the scene of which was laid in northern Mexico, and No. 417-The Captain of Captains, a story of the The old original Algerine Pirates. Beadles Dime Novels were the writers delight in his early boyhood days and he has cherished a love for them ever since the day when long, long years ago, he bought the first number of that famous oldtime publication.

No. 127

San Francisco's Chinatown had, at the time of which the writer treats, a most evil and sinister reputation. The San Francisco Chronicle, the most noted paper of the city, had published a series of articles of a most sensational nature, which gave an expose of the hideous character of the condition existing in the hidden dens of Chinatown. These articles gave a description of the long tunnels of the district. Of concealed rooms fitted up with oriental luxury where the bound slaves of the opium habit met to enjoy their soul killing vice; and where kidnapped white girls were forced into lives of degradation to satisfy the lust of their Chinese masters. One article gave an account of how a squad of police and detectives forced their way through a maze of tunnels and passages till they came to a locked door. They forced it open and then shrank back at the horrible sight upon which they gazed. Standing almost nude before them was a creature of a most awful nature-a leper. The appaled officers recoiled in horror as they looked on the miserable wretch whose rotten flesh was literally falling from his bones. The unfortunate creature had been locked in a miserable den with only a heap of straw to slowly starve to death, that being the easiest way of getting rid of him. The Chronicle also gave descriptions of the unspeakable drunken bestial orgies, of the miserable white slaves and their Chinese slave drivers. Also the paper described concealed rooms fitted up as gambling hells where gambling for high stakes took place behind iron doors barred and bolted, which the police had to break open by the use of heavy hammers, and powerful forcing machines. Likewise the paper gave an account of hidden dens concealed at the end of long passages where counterfeit money in large amounts was manufactured, and put in circulation; and also of the p ts filled with quicklime where the bod s of murdered victims of diabolic plots were finally disposed of. All this the paper told in graphic style, and concluded its expose of the hidden mysteries of Chinatown with a complete description of the Chinese secret society, and the Tong wars that flared up from fime to time when the rival Tongs shot each other down in the open street, the murderers disappearing into the hidden alleys and narrow courts of Chinatown. The Tong wars often caused by jealousy. One Tong having gained a pretty slave girl or a choice consignment of opium at the expense of a rival Tong. This would call for vengeance, and so the hatchet

men, and the high-binders, as the nired murderers were called, proceeded to stage a little private war all their own.

I have described my home in my early boyhood days, and will now detail how I came to have a glimpse of the condition that existed in Chinatown. We had as a house servant a fine little China boy whom I will call Sing. I having forgotten his real name after all these years. Sing and I became very good friends and he could not do enough for me. He was continually bringing me toys and Chinese candys, and at last begged my mother to allow him to take me on a visit to Chinatown. At length she consented, and so one day Sing and I started off on our trip to Chinatown. On our arrival there Sing took me to a Chinese restaurant where we dined on birds nest soup, shark fins, and other delicacies dear to the Chinese heart. On leaving the restaurant we visited the Chinese theatre and saw a part of one of the interminable Chinese plays that take a week to perform, and so we saw but a small part of it. When we left the theatre and passing along an alley a man with a most repulsive face spoke to Sing who did not repl but hurried me along as quick as he could. I saw that he was frightene! and asked him what was the matter. "Him bad man. Him velly mad man. Him hatchet man," was his reply, and we both did not feel safe till reached the main street. But our adventurers in Chinatown were not yet Before we left the Chinese over. quarter we stopped to visit the Joss House. I was much interested in the Joss, and the clouds of incense, and the rich furniture of the temple. It amused me greatly to see the Chinese devotees kneeling before the Joss and bowing till their heads touched the floor, and started to laugh. But Sing quickly stopped me but no one paid any attention but only smiled at the little white boy.

We had been in the Joss House but a short time when all at once, Bang! Bang! was heard outside, and every one rushed out to see what was the matter. It was bad enough. There on the sidewalk lay the bodies of two murdered Chinamen with the blood from their numerous wounds staining the spot where they fell. They were the first victims of another Tong War. Sing and I got away from there

in a hurry. And when on reaching home I told my mother of our experiences, she promptly put a veto on any more trips to Chinatown. Long years afterward when Daugherty wrote his Old King Brady stories that had as a background the San Francisco Chinatown he did not have to draw much on his imagination for the facts were far mole terrible and strange than any fiction, and the adventures of Harry and Alice were duplicate in real life when they, and Old King Brady, started to pursue some criminal, or to unravel some mystery in the dark ways of Chinatown.

At the time the writer had an uncle who was working a mine near a place called Bishop in northern California, and one summer the writer and his mother paid him a visit. The country where the mine was located was famous as being the Bret Harte country, it being the scene where that distinguished author located his stories of the '49 days, the famous Luck of Roaring Camp, and the Outcasts of Poker Flat and others, including the humorous poem The Heathen Chinee:

"For ways that are dark
And tricks that are vain
The Heathen Chinee is Peculiar,
Which same I am free to
maintain."

Also the region was noted in the pioneer days as being the stamping grounds of the notorious outlaw, the bandit Joaquin Murietta, where he had his retinue in the mighty mountain ranges of the land.

Mark Twain had also given it celebrity in his writings, which included the well known humorous story The Jumping Frog of California, In that town they now hold an annual festival which includes a contest between trained frogs entered by their masters to see which could jump the furtherest and so gain the yearly title of the furtherest Jumping Frog and a mon-In Beadles Dime Library ev prize. there are a number of stories the scene of which is laid in the region. Among them were the following -Injin Dick, The Death Spot of Shasta. The Velvet Hand, Richard Talbot, The Gold Dragon, and a number of others.

My Uncle's mine was a tunnel driven in the side of a mountain. Light rails had been laid down, and along them ran a little ore car, and it was the joy of my heart to help fill that car, and run it out to the ore dump where wagons would take it away to the mill some miles distant. I spent a very happy summer at the mine, and in the country I have tried to describe, and it was only when my Uncle sold the mine for a large sum that mother and I returned to San Francisco.

#### COL. INGRAHAM'S BEAR ROBE

We elsewhere give the true story of McCabe the great bear fighter from the pen of Dr. Powell. The manuscript ended with this paragraph:

The bear-skin which I send you, dear Ingraham, is from one of the bears that killed McCabe's Bertie, and it came into my possession upon the death of my old friend the Bear Killer, whose tragic fate I will so be day relate in print. It goes to you fraught with memories of the mountains. Its shaggy coat has been thousand times bathed with the tears of one of the bravest men who evalved among the sighing cedars of the great Rockies. With pleasure I inscribe upon it: "From Frank Pow" to his friend, Col. Prentiss Ingraham."

That robe we dare say, will be preserved for generations for its memories and history.

(Taken from page 4, Beadles Week-ly, No. 5, December 16, 1882).

#### THE LUNATIC NOVELIST

(Taken from Beadles Weekly, page 4. June 16, 1883)

Gustave Aimard, the French Mayne Reid, whose romances of the will southwest were greatly in favor twenty years ago, recently died in an insane asylum, a victim of softening of the brain. His stories came back to him in his madness, and he constantly imagined that he was on the war-path, and that Indians were after his scalp. Before his mind failed he was a very popular member of society. Now and then, in company, some one would tease him by insinuating that he had entirely drawn upon his imagination for his tales, and that he really had never traveled outside of Paris. Then he would become purple with rage, and roll out mouth-filling oaths at a fearful rate. On such occasions, after averring that he had traveled all over America afoot (which was true) he went on to tell the following story, which was not true,

but which he told so often that he at last came to believe it most fixedly. He related that he was once lost in a forest. He was accompanied by an Indian guide, hired from a friendly tribe in the last village through which he had passed a couple of months previously. He tried to cut his way through the jungle, but in vain. He looked toward his companion, who returned his glance, and opening his lips for the first time, exclaimed in excellent French: "We are lost, indeed!" Aimard failed to explain how an Indian could speak good French, but it was one of his pecularities to have his heroes and heroines overcome difficulties and conditions in a way that would make a true denizen of the wilderness "just get up and howl" with admiration of the writer's intentive powers.

#### NEWSY NEWS By Ralph F. Cummings

More bad news. In the last ice storm we had, March 18th, Eli A. Messier, 117 Morton Ave., Woonsocket, R. I., fell on the icy steps at his home that day, when he was going to work. and not knowing that the cement steps were icy, boy, he landed on his back so quick, he hardly knew what had happend. So his wife helped him up and into the house, and they phoned a doctor. He's afraid there's two ribs that are either cracked or broken, but couldn't tell then on account of the swelling. Around his left elbow there's a black and blue spot 6 inches long and 31/2 to 4 inches wide. Never saw any thing like it before, as he was up to see me Sunday. We're all very sorry for you Eli, and we all know what it is to slip and fall. The old saying is, "the bigger they are. the harder they fall," and I guess it's true.

February 15th and 16th, 1943 were the coldest two days we've had in a long, long time up this way. Some places not far from here, were 54 below, but we had it here 40 below. Gosh, you'd think those few days we were all up in Alaska, or near the North Pole, and how the wind did blow, and to think I was in the hospital all through it, and most of the icy season too as it was about the iclest season we've ever had. Heard the other day from our doctor, that one cause I was up to the hospital

was for a bad strain. So I'm to be careful I don't do any heavy lifting hereafter for some while to come, for if I do, I'm liable to be back in the hospital, and it won't be so nice the next time, I'm told. (Doc says I won't like the nurses so well either). So according to that, if I had to go back, maybe I'd wish I never had been born.

P. C. Maraske, 4133 57th St., Woodside, L. I., New York, has a nice lot of Beadles Half Dime Libraries for sale at the right prices, or will trade for some of his special wants.

Col. B. R. Pearson (Idaho Bill) died Nov. 28th, 1942 in Los Angeles, Calif., and also Mrs. Francis Fisher of 1122 So. 48th St., Philadelphia, Pa., where Ye Editor helped take care of Uncle Billie Benners before he died in 1940, at Mrs. Marie L. Bendig's. Mrs. Fisher was a sister-in-law of Mrs. Bendig. Mrs. Bendig also lost her sister a short time before that. Fine people, too, God bless them all.

Who has any extra numbers of Nos. 2 and 97 of Dime Novel Roundup for sale, name your price.

Here's an item that will be interesting to Joe Parks. In answer to correspondence in Ching Ching's Own No. 151 Old Series, May 9th, 1891 appeared this answer: R. A. H. Goodyear—"Poem very fair, and we will endeavor to spare a corner for it." In No. 155 the poem—

"The Happy Voyager on His Love" When the bright sun's at its fullest,

When the wild beasts round us prey; When the birds with their sweet voices Send a welcome to the Day;

When our good ship gayly dances
On the wide, expansive sea;
When the trees are waying o'er us—

Then my love, I think of thee.
When at night the air is filled

With the summer's cooling balm
When the moon in silver splendour
Bathes the trees in lovely calm;
When the birds in this yast forest

Hush their sweetest melody; When all nature's quiet around us— Then, my love, I think of thee.

R. A. H. Goodyear.

Sent in by George S. Barton, and he says "not bad for a lad of about 12 years of age." R. A. H. Goodyear has written for J. Parks magazine several times and was a well known author of books for boys at the present time.

Here's another one-E. Harcourt

Burrage, the creator of Handsome Harry, Ching Ching, Tony Tarter, etc., was member No. 12763 of the Golden Hours Club of London, England, Membership card dated June 26th, 1889 and signed by N. L. Munro.

Alf H. Pearce, who did much writing for Harmsworth, Aldine Pub. Co., and other publishers of boys papers and novels got his first encouragement and publications from Burgage in Ching Ching's Own for many of his poems appear in that paper. More in next issue on Ching Ching, etc.

Echoes and Rumors haven't come in yet, but they'll be in on time for the May issue

the May issue.
George Barton says—Frank Tousey certainly had a great seller in the Wide Awake Library. After he started it he sure pushed them out on the market, until some where between five and six hundred, they came out at the rate of three and four a week. Some where about the middle of the five hundred they were appearing at the rate of one a day. (Some record.) 'hirteen numbers were issued in Dec. 1878, fourteen in Jan. 1879, thirteen in Feb. 1879. No wonder collectors have been puzzled.

George says when he was a boy he used to go with his dad to the docks East Boston and Charlestown, Mass., where the ships from England docked-there was always many huge bags of old English paper and magazines, evidently sent here to be processed over. While he was abroad ship I would spend the time rummaging around the magazines from bales that had broken open-once in a while I confess I would help one to rip a trifle more. I used to run into many odd copies of English Boys Papers and Libraries, such as Boys Own Paper, Chums, True Blue, and odd Nos. of penny dreadfuls. Would hide prizes under my blouse and read them when I got home-was never able to keep them long for dad was a bloodhound on the trail of the "Novels" and they would be burned.

How about Willis Hurd writing up an article on Golden Hours?

Regarding the bound volumes without covers—George B. thinks that a more or less wrong idea is prevailing ahong the collectors—of course we would all like "min" items with the original covers exactly as they came from the publishers. The mere fact of these yolumes not having the orig-

inal covers should not weigh against them. The same illustration appears as a frontispiece in many of the old dime Novels, and was used on the cover. When those were bound it was the custom to remove the covers before binding—it is today unless you specify that you want them on—I bound some Doc Savages for a fellow and had to fight the bindery to save the colored covers on them.

George French says—From No. 994 Boys of New York and up into Happy Days is a California Joe story—title is "Jack Mosby, the Guerrilla King, or Riding and Raiding in the War of the Rebellion."

"Who Is Who Among Authors of Dime Novels, etc." Sounds good, and one of our members, Charles F. Heavtman, Hattiesburg, Miss., thinks such a book is badly needed. He is willing to make up such a book if all will help by sending him information of all kinds.

Ned Buntline wrote "Scouts of the Prairie," the play in which Buffalo Lill made his stage debut in four hours. Reviewing the first performance of the play, the critics wondered why it had taken so long.

Some where in India, a Sikh printer works on page 1 of Roundup, the Soldier Newspaper serving U. S. Servicemen in India, Burma and China. Sounds like our dear old Roundup at first.

Beadles Dime Novels #8, "Seth Jones or the Captives of the Frontier," by Edward S. Ellis. 123 pages of reading matter, size 4½ x 6½ inches, date 1863, with picture of a scout on the front cover, dressed in buckskin and coonskin cap, has rifle in hand, and powder horn at right side, salmon colored covers, has frontispiece of same as front cover inside. One col. to the page. Published by Beadle and Company, 118 Williams St., New York. This is a later issue and I just landed it, too.

So long, fellows, sorry I was sick and couldn't get the Roundup out on time, but will do my best just the same.

Reckless Ralph Cummings.

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Twin Strangers, by Sinclair Tousev. uncle of Frank Tousey, the Boys of New York publisher, red cloth—50c.

RALPH F. CUMMINGS Fisherville, Mass. (Clipped from The Publishers Weekly—Sept. 27, 1941.)

Charles E. Tuttle Company (Rutland, Vt.) in its latest catalog, "Americana and General Literature" quotes a paragraph from the first of the Dime Novel, "Malaeska: The Indian Wife of the White Hunter," by Mrs. Ann S. Stephens, New York, Beadle & Company (1860). The paragraph is noteworthy in that it sums up the attitude of the Beadles and early dime novels in general, publications which were in the main far more moral than the average "hard cover" novel of the same period. Stated the Beadles: "by the publication of the series contemplated, it is hoped to reach all classes, old and young, male and female, in a manner at once to captivate and to enliven-to answer the popular demand for works of romance, but," (and here is a most important but), "but also to instil a pure and elevating sentiment in the ears and minds of the people." It is a matter of record that the dime novels were attacked as immoral by some who had never read one and whose judgment was based wholly on the fact of the low price that threatened to cut into the sales of the established publishers of the more expensive and elaborate books. It is probably true that certain of the latter publishers financed some of the attacks but that the attempted suppression failed, as all such attempts must, is part of American book trade history.

Black Cat Magazines for sale—25c each, or all 30 for \$6.00. Valley Book Co., Fisherville, Mass.

WANTED—The Mysterious Bed, in Pallou or Beadles Dime Novels. Dutton's Inc., 270 Park Ave., New York City, N. Y.

WANTED For Cash—Street & Smith and Tousey 5 cent Weeklies. C. E. Douglas, 402 Williams St., Vienna, W. Va.

WANTED—Big or Small lot of Old Cap Collier Libraries. Address—Williams Book Store, 81-87 Washington St., Boston, Mass.

WANTED—Great Western Library, Nos. 22-24. U. G. Figley, Route 1, Bryan, Ohio.

FOR SALE-New Magnet Library, Nos. 1228 to 1299, 71 books, in nice shape, \$10.50 post paid. Eli A Messier 117 Morton Ave., Woonsocket, R. I.

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